

What is an MSBU?



Municipal Service Benefit Unit Program

Seminole County Government
Department of Fiscal Services

What is the MSBU Program?

The Municipal Service Benefit Unit [MSBU] Program provides property owners in unincorporated areas of Seminole County with an opportunity to acquire essential public health and safety improvements or services for their communities. The MSBU Program is administered by the Department of Fiscal Services.

An MSBU is a special assessment district created to provide funding for services or improvements that are authorized through the MSBU Program. The implementation of an MSBU requires property owner support and participation.

What are the basic MSBU requirements?

The Seminole County Board of County Commissioners will give approval consideration for an MSBU when the following criterion are met:

- The benefiting property is located in unincorporated Seminole County.
- The property upon which the improvement is to be made is publicly owned.
- Two or more parcels receive benefit and participate in the MSBU district.
- MSBU Program Guidelines and Procedures are satisfied.

What types of projects qualify?

The Seminole County MSBU Program offers consideration for four types of community improvements or services:

- Aquatic Weed Control: Includes aquatic weed control and recontouring of retention ponds
- Construction: Includes road paving, drainage, sidewalks, water service, sewer service, and perimeter walls
- Solid Waste: Includes curbside collection and disposal of household garbage, recycling and yard waste and access to County disposal facilities
- Street Lighting: Includes residential street lighting fixtures, poles and utilities

Who pays for the MSBU improvements?

The property owners benefiting from the services or improvements share equitably in the project costs. For most projects, funding is initially provided by the County through the MSBU Program. Once construction or implementation is complete, repayment for the project cost is collected through the district property owners' annual property tax bill in the form of an annual non-ad valorem assessment. Financing arrangements for a project are coordinated by the MSBU Program.

What costs are included in an MSBU?

Total project costs generally include implementation and/or construction costs, administrative and collection costs, and financing costs. Cost estimates are provided at various stages in the MSBU process. In most cases, cost estimates are determined through preliminary engineering reports or project specific cost analysis. Final costs are based on actual construction costs and are provided at the Final Public Hearing.

How are assessments calculated?

The total assessment assigned to the benefiting properties is based on total project cost. The method for calculating individual property cost share or assessment varies for each type of MSBU. Allocation of cost may be per lot, per homesite, per front foot, per acre, or other equitable measure.

Construction project assessment financing terms can vary from one to ten years. Aquatic weed control and street lighting district assessments are ongoing unless a specific ending date for the services is defined in the Petition and governing Ordinance.

**Municipal Service
Benefit Unit Program** Need more information?
Call (407) 665-7178
or visit our website.

What is the MSBU Process?

<u>Steps</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1. Request application and procedures from the MSBU Program representative.	Property Owners
2. Complete and submit application with the required application fee and documentation.	Property Owners
3. Review MSBU Application and scope of services.	MSBU/Engineering
4. Provide initial cost estimate of requested improvement.	MSBU/Engineering
5. Review cost estimates and offer detailed information regarding the requested MSBU. Consider Survey of Interest.	MSBU/Property Owners
6. Submit payment for preliminary engineering fees. <i>[When applicable]</i>	Property Owners
7. Complete Petition for Improvement process.	MSBU/Property Owners
8. Hold First Public Hearing to establish MSBU. <i>[adoption of ordinance]</i>	MSBU/BCC
9. Implementation of project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain final engineering plans • Bid the construction • Construct the improvements 	Engineering/Consultant Purchasing/Engineering Engineering/Contractor
10. Hold Final Public Hearing to establish final costs. <i>[Construction projects only]</i>	MSBU/BCC

How is property owner support determined?

A Petition for Improvement document is distributed to determine the level of property owner support. MSBU Guidelines require the following support levels prior to requesting BCC consideration:

- A 55% favorable response for street lighting
- A 65% favorable response for all other project types

Additionally, a favorable response on the Petition for Improvement is required from 100% of the property owners from whom property dedication or easement is required.

What if the property is not publicly owned?

By virtue of Florida Statutes, the creation of an MSBU is dependent on providing services or improvements that are considered to meet public purposes. Meeting this criterion often requires that the property on which an improvement is made must be publicly owned. In some circumstances, the granting of utility, construction or maintenance related easements or leaseholds can provide the means for complying with the statutes.

MSBU Related Definitions

Assessment - a fixed value or dollar amount to be charged

BCC – Board of County Commissioners

District - a designated geographic area that is assessed for services or improvements provided to that area

Non-ad valorem assessment - special assessment for a specific purpose that is collected on the annual property tax bill

Ordinance - formal legislative enactment by the Board of County Commissioners

Public Hearing - a public meeting of the Board of County Commissioners

Survey of Interest - an informal communication to property owners with the purpose of determining preliminary interest in pursuing services or improvements through an MSBU

Petition for Improvement - a formal written request addressed to the Board of County Commissioners on which signatures are collected to demonstrate support of a project

Unincorporated area - a geographic area that is not within the boundaries of any municipality

**For additional
MSBU Program information
please call (407) 665-7178 or visit
our website.**

www.seminolecountyfl.gov/msbu/

**Presented as a Public Service
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SEMINOLE COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**